



California Department of Fish and Game Deer Management Program 2008 Deer Zone Information

Wildlife Branch
1812 9th Street Sacramento, CA 95811

General Deer Hunting Information For **ZONE X-9a** **and** **Area-Specific Archery Hunt A-16** (Includes Additional Hunts G-39 and J-12)

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR DEER HUNT ZONE

This information sheet has been prepared to assist deer hunters applying for, or planning to hunt in, Zone X-9a located in portions of Fresno, Inyo, Madera and Mono counties. The following information should be useful to hunters for archery season (A-16; Zone X-9a Archery Hunt), Zone X-9a general season and any "additional hunts" within this geographic area. For more specific information or additional questions regarding this area, contact the following Department office(s):

Inland Deserts Region (Region 6), Bishop Field Office (760-872-1171).

REGULATIONS

Laws and regulations are designed to conserve wildlife and to provide for an equitable distribution of game mammals. The hunter who knows the laws and regulations can enjoy the hunting experience more. All hunters should read and be familiar with the current hunting regulations available online at:

<http://www.fgc.ca.gov/regulations/current/mammalregs.asp>

The 2008 deer hunting regulations specific for Zone X-9a (general season tag), Area-Specific Archery Hunt A-16 (archery season only tag), and any additional hunts are at the end of this sheet.

To hunt deer during the archery season in Zone X-9a, hunters must possess an A-16 hunt tag (Zone X-9a Archery Hunt). This tag is valid **ONLY** during the prescribed archery season and **may not** be used to hunt deer during the general zone season, even if using archery equipment.

To hunt deer during the general season (rifle) in Zone X-9a, a hunter must possess a Zone X-9a tag. This tag is valid **ONLY** during the prescribed general season for that zone. These tags **may not** be used to hunt deer during the Hunt A-16 archery season, even if using archery equipment.

This zone is a popular deer hunting area with lower tag quotas. Any additional deer hunts in Zone X-9a are listed in the Additional Deer Hunts section, below. Typically, tags for Zone X-9a, Hunt A-16 and any additional deer hunts are in high demand and distributed through the Department's Big Game Drawing held in June. To hunt in this area, hunters must plan ahead and are encouraged to submit hunt applications by late May. For information regarding deer tag application procedures and obtaining a deer tag for this area, see the 2008 Hunting Digest, available on-line at:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/licensing/biggame/biggamebook.html>

Successful hunters are reminded to immediately fill out both portions of the tag and permanently mark the date of kill; attach the tag to the antlers, or ear if antlerless; have the tag validated and countersigned; and return the completed report card portion to the Department within 30 days of taking a deer.

LAND OWNERSHIP/PUBLIC LAND OPPORTUNITIES

The majority of Zone X-9a is public land however some private land occurs within the zone primarily within the Long Valley, Crowley Lake, Mammoth Lakes, and June Lake areas. Remember you must obtain and have in your possession written permission to hunt on private property. Hunter trespass laws are strictly enforced. Public land is administered by the Inyo National Forest (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). For information regarding these lands contact the following:

USFS Offices:

Inyo National Forest, 351 Pacu Lane, Suite 200, Bishop, CA 93514 (760-873-2400)

BLM Offices:

Bishop Field Office, 351 Pacu Lane, Suite 100, Bishop, CA 93514 (760-872-5000)

Popular and well known geographical features in the zone include the eastern escarpment of the Sierra Nevada, including the Rock Creek drainage; Mammoth Mountain and the Mammoth Lakes Basin; the Owens River, which winds its way through Long Valley to Crowley Lake; the Glass Mountains, a small, isolated mountain range located on the north side of Long Valley; the Mono Basin and Mono Lake; the June Lake Loop, including June, Gull, Silver, and Grant Lakes; and the Conway Summit area.

In Zone X-9a and other zones throughout California, additional deer hunting opportunities may exist on private property licensed through the Department's Private Lands Management Program (PLM). For more information on the PLM and to obtain a list of participating ranches, go to the following link:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/hunting/plm.html>

MAPS

For general maps detailing individual zone or additional deer hunt boundaries, go to the following link:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/hunting/deer/zonemapsinfo.html>

The most comprehensive map of the area is the Inyo National Forest map. In addition, the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area map, and the Eastern High Sierra Recreation Topo Map are good sources. USFS maps are available at all USFS offices or you can contact the USFS Pacific Southwest Regional Office at: 1323 Club Drive, Vallejo, CA 94592 (707-562-8737).

BLM surface management maps may also be useful. The Bishop and Benton Range BLM maps are good sources. You can purchase these maps at BLM district offices or you can contact the BLM at 2800 Cottage Way, Suite W-1834, Sacramento, CA 95825 (916-978-4400).

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps, are very helpful, especially for topographic features that are not displayed on USFS or BLM maps. USGS maps may be available from sporting goods, backpacking or engineering stores or you can contact the USGS directly at: Rocky Mountain Mapping Center, Branch of Information Services, Box 25286, Denver, CO 80225 (888-ASK-USGS). The Bishop, Benton Range 1:100,000-scale topographic map is a preferred choice of many outdoorsmen. Some 7.5-minute quadrangle maps for the zone include Rovana, Fish Slough, Chidago Canyon, Casa Diablo Mountain, Hammil Valley, Banner Ridge, Toms Place, Convict Lake, Bloody Mountain, Old Mammoth, Mammoth Mountain, Mount Ritter, Crystal Crag, Crestview, June Lake, Koip Peak, Mount Dana, Lundy, Whitmore Hot Springs, Dexter Canyon, Glass Mountain, Cowtrack Mountain, Indian Meadows, River Springs, Benton Hot Springs, Lee Vining, Tioga Pass, Dunderberg Peak, Negit Island, Mono Mills, and Sulphur Pond.

ACCESS/MAJOR ROADS

U.S. Highway 395 is the primary route of access through Zone X-9a. This major north-south highway parallels the eastern escarpment of the Sierra Nevada between the City of Bishop to the south, and the town of Lee Vining to the north. Other major highways within the zone that can be accessed from Highway 395 include 6, 203, 120, 158, and 167. These highways provide access to hundreds of improved

and unimproved dirt roads that penetrate the zone's interior. Vehicle access to the west of Highway 395 and south of Mammoth Lakes is generally limited to improved roads within major drainages, such as Convict Creek, McGee Creek, and Rock Creek. However, numerous unimproved dirt roads also skirt the base of the Sierra escarpment. Generally, terrain located to the east of Highway 395 is more readily accessible by vehicle than terrain to the west; however, the pumice soils in the area are soft and fragile so hunters are required to restrict OHV travel to designated roads only.

WEATHER CONDITIONS/TRAVEL TIPS

The weather in this region is highly variable so BE PREPARED. Warm days and cold nights with below freezing temperatures are common during the first half of the season. During the later half of the season, cool days and cold nights are the general rule with snow often developing at the higher elevations. Thundershowers are common. You should be prepared with appropriate clothing and equipment for a variety of weather conditions.

Zone X-9a encompasses a large geographic area with topography ranging from flat in the lower elevation valleys to very steep and rocky in the higher mountains of the Sierra Nevada. Most services are located within the various towns scattered along the base of the Sierra Nevada escarpment, including Bishop, Toms Place, Mammoth Lakes, June Lake, and Lee Vining. Hunters are advised to have full gasoline tanks when entering the field and to carry snow chains, shovel, serviceable spare tire, and extra food and water. Four-wheel-drive vehicles should be used when traveling on unimproved roads within the zone. Be sure to use extra caution when driving off-road, and check with USFS or BLM regarding any vehicle travel restrictions that may be in place.

CAMPING

There are numerous USFS, BLM, and Inyo/Mono County campgrounds located on public lands within Zone X-9a. Many of these campgrounds are open until the end of October however some higher elevation campgrounds close prior to deer season. For campground information contact the USFS (Inyo National Forest; 760-873-2400) or BLM (760-872-5000). For information on Inyo or Mono County campgrounds contact the Inyo County Department of Parks and Recreation, County Services Building, 785 N. Main Street, Suite G, Bishop, CA 93514 (760-873-5577); or the Mono County Department of Public Works, 74 School Street North, Bridgeport, CA 93517 (760-932-5440). Overnight camping is not allowed on Los Angeles Department of Water and Power lands.

For areas where informal camping is allowed, you need to obtain a California Campfire Permit for the use of any open flame (including gas stoves, lanterns, wood fires, charcoal fires, or smoking). These permits can be obtained at no cost from any Inyo National Forest Ranger Station, BLM office, or Visitor Center. Open flame of any kind may be restricted during times of high fire danger; check with the local Forest Service office for current restrictions.

Please, DO NOT camp or hunt for prolonged periods near water sources important to wildlife and livestock. Remaining for over 30 minutes and within 200 yards of an artificial water source including guzzlers or horizontal wells on public lands within California is a Fish and Game violation (Title 14, Section 730). You can pack water, wildlife can't.

HARVEST INFORMATION

Information on deer harvest for this area is available in tables contained in the annual Deer Kill Reports available on-line at: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/hunting/deer/deerhunt.html> The most useful tables for the purposes of planning or applying for hunts in this area are Tables 1b (Harvest and Success Information), 2a (Antler Class Information) and 10b (Drawing Statistics).

HERD CONDITIONS AND HABITATS

The deer population in Zone X-9a is considered stable to slightly declining, yet considerably below levels seen in the late 1960's and 1970's. As with most deer herds in California and other western states, the long-term population trend has been on a steady decline since the 1960's and 1970's. These long-term declines have been due to land management practices that have precluded fire, resulting in changes toward more mature and less diverse habitats, and reduced quality and quantity of deer habitats. Short-

term fluctuations in deer populations are usually attributed to weather events that affect forage production and the availability of water.

The subspecies of deer inhabiting Zone X-9a is the Inyo mule deer. The deer herds found within the boundaries of Zone X-9a are the Round Valley (southern portion of zone) and the Casa Diablo (northern portion of zone) Deer Herds. Deer in Zone X-9a are migratory, spending summers at higher elevations (7,500-11,000 feet) along the eastern escarpment of the Sierra Nevada and winters at lower elevations (5,000-7,500 feet) in the southeastern or eastern portions of Mono County and into Mineral County, Nevada. Deer migration between these winter and summer ranges occurs twice annually, once during spring and then again in the fall. Migrations generally follow traditional routes oriented along major topographic features, such as drainages or the bases of mountain ranges. Fall migration back to the winter range is generally patterned by snow storms and freezing temperatures at the higher elevations. This migration generally begins in late October and follows the same traditional routes used by deer in the spring. During heavy fall snowstorms, deer will migrate together from the summer range, often making the trip to the winter range in just a few days. As the snowline lowers and the days become progressively shorter, deer concentrate on the winter range for the breeding season, which begins in mid-November.

Zone X-9a is an ecologically diverse zone, supporting a variety of deer habitats distributed across elevations ranging from 5,000-11,000 feet. The zone comprises winter, summer, and transition ranges; however, during the archery and general hunting seasons most deer are concentrated on the summer range. Some of the more conspicuous habitat types occupied by mule deer on the summer range include Great Basin sagebrush, Pinyon-Juniper Woodland, Jeffrey Pine Forest, Montane Chaparral, Montane Riparian Forest, and Subalpine Conifer Forest.

Great Basin sagebrush scrub is an upland habitat type associated with the drier valley bottoms and alluvial fans occurring in Long Valley and the Mono Basin. This habitat type supports numerous shrub species that provide quality forage and cover for deer, including big sagebrush, antelope bitterbrush, snowberry, and mountain whitethorne. Pinyon-Juniper Woodland habitat occurs in association with Great Basin sagebrush scrub on mid-elevation deer transition and summer ranges located in the Mono Basin and the Glass Mountains. Pinyon pine and western juniper, the dominant tree species, provide important thermal and security cover for deer. Jeffrey pine is a dry land forest habitat that dominates vegetation east of Highway 395 from the upper Owens River north to Mono Lake and east through the Glass Mountains. This forest habitat typically supports understory shrubs that provide nutritious browse for deer.

Montane chaparral habitat occurs primarily along the eastern escarpment of the Sierra Nevada at elevations ranging from 7,000-9,000 feet. This habitat type supports a variety of shrubs that provide deer with nutritious summer browse and dense concealment cover. Montane Riparian Forest is a tree dominated habitat that occurs along the many stream courses that flow east from the Sierra Nevada escarpment. Common tree species associated with riparian forest habitat include quaking aspen, lodgepole pine, black cottonwood, and Jeffrey pine. This habitat type also supports various shrubs including willow, water birch, and gooseberry that provide important forage and cover for deer. Subalpine Conifer Forest is dominated by a mixture of evergreen tree species that occur at higher elevations of the summer range along the Sierra Nevada escarpment and in the Glass Mountains.

Water is generally well distributed throughout Zone X-9a, especially to the west of Highway 395 along the Sierra Nevada escarpment from Tom's Place and north to Conway Summit. The numerous streams and seeps that flow from the Sierra Nevada Crest not only provide water during the warm summer months, but also support the lush forage conditions favored by deer. Conditions to the east of Highway 395 are generally much drier with water primarily isolated to the meadows and drainages that flow from the Glass Mountain Range and the upper Owens River. Along with the occasional spring or seep, stock watering tanks in Long Valley and the Mono Basin also provide important water sources for deer on the summer range.

HUNTING TIPS AND WHERE TO LOOK FOR DEER

Successful hunters often spend a considerable amount of time scouting pre-season, locating individual or groups of deer, recently used deer trails, and feeding and bedding areas. You may not see many deer

from the roads in this area and generally the more successful hunters do more hiking to locate deer. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes can be very helpful for locating and identifying deer at greater distances. In general, attempt to hunt areas that are away from other activities such as concentrations of hunters, vehicles, and/or livestock.

Deer occur throughout the entire zone during the archery and general hunting seasons. However, the highest concentrations of animals generally occur to the west of Highway 395 along the eastern escarpment of the Sierra Nevada. Deer habitat in this area is characterized by open sagebrush scrub and montane chaparral brush fields interspersed with lush meadows and groves of aspen and pine forest. Many steep drainages flow east from the Sierra Nevada Crest and these drainages typically support perennial water and lush riparian vegetation. Deer typically occur in close proximity to these riparian areas, as well as other habitats that provide adequate combinations of food, cover, and water.

Specific areas to the west of Highway 395 that hunters may want to investigate include the Rock Creek drainage, McGee Mountain, Laurel Mountain, Deadman Creek, Agnew Meadows and the middle fork of the San Joaquin River, Reverse Peak, the June Lake Loop area, Parker Bench, the Parker and Walker Lake drainages, Bohler Canyon, Upper and Lower Horse Meadows, Lee Vining Canyon, Lundy Canyon, and Conway Summit, including the Jordan Basin and Copper Mountain areas. During late summer and early fall, many mature bucks can often be found above tree line, between 9,000-10,500 feet elevation, on open, sparsely vegetated, wind blown ridgelines and mountain tops. This high elevation habitat usually occurs in areas free of human disturbance; and therefore, is generally accessible only to backpackers and hunters with pack stock.

Hunters electing to hunt to the east of Highway 395 will generally find drier conditions, with habitat dominated by sagebrush scrub and Jeffrey Pine forest. Specific areas to investigate include Long Valley, Bald Mountain, the Glass Mountain Range, Sagehen Summit, and the Mono Lake Basin area.

For additional information about deer hunting in California, see the Department's publication "Guide To Hunting Deer In California" at the following web site:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/hunting/deer/docs/deerguide.pdf>

ADDITIONAL DEER HUNTS

In 2008, two additional hunt opportunities exist in Zone X-9a: 1) Hunt G-39 (Round Valley Late Season Buck Hunt); and 2) Hunt J-12 (Round Valley Apprentice Buck Hunt). For general maps detailing the individual hunt area boundaries, go to the following link:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/hunting/deer/deermaps.html>

2008 ZONE AND ADDITIONAL HUNT SPECIFIC REGULATIONS

§ 360. Deer.

Except as otherwise provided in this Title 14, deer may be taken only as follows:

(b) X-Zone Hunts.

(13) Zone X-9a.

(A) Area: In those portions of Fresno, Inyo, Madera and Mono counties within a line beginning at the intersection of Highway 6 and the California-Nevada state line; south along Highway 6 to its junction with Highway 395; south along Highway 395 to its junction with Highway 168; west and south along Highway 168 to the North Lake Road turnoff; west along the North Lake Road and the Piute Pass Trail to the Sierra Crest (Inyo National Forest Boundary); north along the Inyo National Forest Boundary to the Deer Creek Trail; south and west along the Deer Creek Trail to the upper crossing of Deer Creek; west and south along Deer Creek to its confluence with Fish Creek; west along Fish Creek to its confluence with the middle fork of the San Joaquin River; north along the middle fork of the San Joaquin River to the junction of King Creek; west along King Creek to the junction of Ashley Creek; west along Ashley Creek to Ashley Lake; continue west along Ashley Creek to the junction of the Inyo National Forest boundary; north along the Inyo National Forest Boundary (the crest of the Ritter Range) to the Mono-Madera county line; north along the Mono-Madera county line to Mono-Tuolumne county line; north on the Mono-Tuolumne county line to the Virginia Lakes Trail (Entry Trail D-11); east along Virginia Lakes Trail to Virginia Lakes Road; east along Virginia Lakes Road to Highway 395; south along Highway 395 to Highway 167; east on Highway 167 to the California-Nevada state line; southeast on the California-Nevada state line to the point of beginning.

(B) Season: The season in Zone X-9a shall open on the third Saturday in September and extend for 24 consecutive days.

(C) Bag and Possession Limit: One buck, forked horn (See subsection 351(a)) or better, per tag.

(D) Number of Tags: 775.

(c) Additional Hunts.

(15) G-39 (Round Valley Late Season Buck Hunt).

(A) Area: In that portion of Inyo and Mono counties within a line beginning at the intersection of U.S. Highway 395 and California Highway 168; west and south along Highway 168 to the North Lake Road turnoff; west along the North Lake Road and the Piute Pass Trail to the Inyo-Fresno county line; north along the Inyo-Fresno county line to the Mono-Fresno county line; north along the Mono-Fresno and Mono-Madera county lines to the junction of the Mono-Madera county line and California Highway 203 at Minaret Summit; southeast along Highway 203 to its junction with Highway 395; south along Highway 395 to the point of beginning.

(B) Season: The season for additional hunt G-39 (Round Valley Late Season Buck Hunt) shall open on the fourth Saturday in October and extend for 16 consecutive days.

(C) Bag and Possession Limit: One buck, forked horn (see subsection 351(a)) or better, per tag.

(D) Number of Tags: 5.

(34) J-12 (Round Valley Apprentice Buck Hunt).

(A) Area: In that portion of Inyo and Mono counties within a line beginning at the intersection of U.S. Highway 395 and California Highway 168; west and south along Highway 168 to the North Lake Road turnoff; west along the North Lake Road and the Paiute Pass Trail to the Inyo-Fresno county line; north along the Inyo-Fresno county line to the Mono-Fresno county line; north along the Mono-Fresno and Mono-Madera county lines to the junction of the Mono-Madera county line and California Highway 203 at Minaret Summit; southeast along Highway 203 to its junction with Highway 395; south along Highway 395 to the point of beginning.

(B) Season: The season for additional hunt J-12 (Round Valley Apprentice Buck Hunt) shall open on the first Saturday in December and extend for 16 consecutive days.

(C) Bag and Possession Limit: One buck, forked horn (see subsection 351(a)) or better, per tag.

(D) Number of Tags: 10.

(E) Special Conditions:

1. Only junior license holders shall apply (see subsection 708(a)(2)).

2. Tagholders shall be accompanied by an adult chaperon 18 years of age or older while hunting.

(44) Conditions for Special Hunts.

(A) When hunting on military reservations or private lands, hunters shall have in their possession a written permit signed by the landowner, which may specify where and when the permittee may hunt.

(B) When required, tagholders shall check in and check out of designated check stations.

§ 361. Archery Deer Hunting.

(b) Archery Hunting With Area-specific Archery Tags. Deer may be taken only with archery equipment specified in Section 354, only during the archery seasons as follows:

(14) A-16 (Zone X-9a Archery Hunt).

(A) Area: As described in subsection 360(b)(13)(A).

(B) Season: The archery season for hunt A-16 (Zone X-9a Archery Hunt) shall open on the third Saturday in August and extend for 23 consecutive days.

(C) Bag and Possession Limit: One buck, forked horn (see subsection 351(a)) or better per tag.

(D) Number of Tags: 150.

(c) Archery Hunting with Archery Only Tags. Deer may be taken only with archery equipment specified in Section 354, during the archery seasons and general seasons as follows:

(1) Number of Archery Only Tags Permitted. A person may obtain an archery only tag using a one-deer tag application and a second archery only tag using a second deer tag application.

(2) Zones in Which Archery Only Tags are Valid. An archery only tag is valid for hunt G-10, and during the archery season and general season in all zones except C-1 through C-4 and X-1 through X-12.

(3) Areas: As described in subsections 360(a) and (c).

(4) Seasons: The archery season and general seasons are provided in subsection 361(a) above and in subsections 360(a) and (c).

(5) Bag and Possession Limit: All bag and possession limits per zone are the same as those described in subsections 360(a) and (c).

(d) Hunting Area Limitations. Archers not in possession of an archery only tag may hunt only in the zone, zones, or areas for which they have a general tag or an area-specific archery tag. (Refer to subsection 361(c)(2) for zones in which archery only tags are valid).

(e) Crossbow Prohibition. Except as provided in subsection 354(j), crossbows may not be used during any archery season or during the general season when using an archery only tag.

**** GOOD LUCK! ****